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A.H. Palmer  
Origin of Mission to Japan

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DOCUMENTS AND FACTS  
ILLUSTRATING THE  
**ORIGIN OF THE MISSION TO JAPAN,**  
AUTHORIZED BY  
GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES,  
MAY 10TH, 1851;  
AND WHICH FINALLY RESULTED IN THE TREATY  
CONCLUDED BY  
**COMMODORE M. C. PERRY, U. S. NAVY,**  
WITH THE JAPANESE COMMISSIONERS AT KANAGAWA, BAY OF YEDO,  
ON THE 31ST MARCH, 1854.

TO WHICH IS APPENDED A LIST OF THE MEMOIRS, &C., PREPARED AND  
SUBMITTED TO THE HON. JOHN P. KENNEDY, LATE SECRETARY OF  
THE NAVY, BY HIS ORDER, ON THE 26TH FEBRUARY, 1853,  
FOR THE USE OF THE PROJECTED U. S. EXPLORING EX-  
PEDITION TO BEHRING'S STRAIT, &C., UNDER THE  
COMMAND OF COMMANDER CADWALLADER  
RINGGOLD, U. S. NAVY,

BY  
**AARON HAIGHT PALMER.**

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WASHINGTON :  
HENRY POLKINGHORN, PRINTER.  
1851.



DSS: /  
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A.

*Copy of the Report presented to the Senate of the United States February 12, 1857, by the Honorable William H. Seward, of the Committee on Commerce, in relation to the Memorial of Aaron Haight Palmer.*

I am directed by the Committee on Commerce, to whom was referred the memorial of Aaron Haight Palmer, praying for compensation for services for collecting information of the statistics, resources, trade, and commerce of the independent Oriental nations, to ask to be discharged from the further consideration of the subject. They have directed me to state that, in asking leave to be discharged, the committee desire not to be understood as expressing any opinion adverse to the claim, but they act simply on the ground of the misdirection to them. The case was originally sent to the Committee on Foreign Relations, who asked to be discharged from its consideration, and caused it to be referred to the Committee on Commerce. The Committee on Commerce find amongst the papers a report of the Hon. John M. Clayton, in favor of the passage of the bill, which it was intended by him to submit to the Committee on Foreign Relations, and this report recognizes the fact of the employment of Mr Palmer by Mr. Clayton himself, when he was Secretary of State. It recognizes also, in Mr. Palmer's communications, the commencement or germ of the Japan expedition. Under these circumstances the committee think he is entitled to a fair consideration of the claim which he makes against the Government; but as it does not fall particularly within their department, but is in the nature of a general claim on the justice of the Government, they ask me to move that they be discharged from the further consideration of the subject, and that it be referred to the Committee on Claims.

The motion was agreed to.—*Congressional Globe*, February 13, 1857, page 662.

The original memorial, Senate, Miss. Doc. No. 10, 33d Cong., 3d Session, 23 pages, was presented by the late Hon. JOHN M. CLAYTON, on the 18th January, 1855, with the following remarks:

I present the petition of Aaron Haight Palmer praying compensation for services rendered by him in communication, and by and under the direction, and with the approbation of three Secretaries of State, I believe, and of several committees of this body. I shall not undertake to state the matters set forth in the petition; the committee, of course, will inquire into them. I only wish to say, as an act of justice to this gentleman, that, from all the information which I have had an opportunity of receiving heretofore in another position, I believe he is entitled to more credit, for getting up the Japan Expedition, than any other man I have heard of. He has thrown more light on it, and given more information on the subject, to the State Department, and to the Congress of the United States, than any one else. His merits, however, in this particular, will be canvassed by those to whom the petition will be referred. I move its reference to the Committee on Foreign Relations. I also ask that it may be printed; which motions were agreed to.—*Congressional Globe*, January 18, 1855, page 307.

B.

*Copy of the Report prepared by the late Hon. John M. Clayton, to present to the Committee on Foreign Relations, of the Senate, in favor of Mr. Palmer's claim. Taken from the original, on file in the office of the Secretary of the Senate.*

The Committee on Foreign Relations, to which was referred the memorial of Aaron Haight Palmer, "praying for compensation for services in collecting valuable information and statistics in relation to the geography, productive resources, trade, commerce, &c., of the independent Oriental nations," having had the same under consideration, beg leave to report:

*That from an attentive examination of the memorial and accompan-*

ing documents submitted to the Committee by Mr. Palmer, it satisfactorily appears that he has been diligently occupied for a considerable number of years in procuring, with great research and untiring industry, from original and authentic sources, (in certain instances from Oriental Rulers themselves,) a large amount of new and valuable information, geographical, political, and commercial, in regard to these eastern nations, especially Japan, and their capabilities for a profitable American commerce.

That he has, on various occasions, between the years 1846 and 1851, addressed interesting and valuable communications on the subject to the House of Representatives and to three Presidents and Secretaries of State, which have been printed as valuable public documents, and are generally considered as important contributions to our knowledge of several of the comparatively unknown maritime nations of the East, (particularly Japan,) and have proved of high interest and value to our government in opening and extending our commercial relations with several of those Eastern countries.

Among those contributions of Mr. Palmer his "Plan for opening Japan," submitted by him to the Secretary of State on the 17th of September, 1849, which met with the Secretary's entire approval, appears to have been subsequently adopted as the basis of the policy of our government in the expedition and mission to the Ruler of that Empire so successfully accomplished by Commodore Perry in accordance, it would seem, with the leading views, suggestions, and recommendations contained therein.

Your committee also find that Mr. Palmer, between 1842 and 1853, addressed a series of letters, communications, and contributions, including copies of his printed documents, to high functionaries in Japan, having for their object the opening of that Empire to American intercourse and commerce, and which he has transmitted from time to time, during the aforementioned periods, to Nagasaki, through the only safe and reliable channels of communication with that secluded and mysterious Empire, it may reasonably be presumed, have had an important influence and agency at that court in preparing the way for the successful result of Commodore Perry's mission.

Mr. Palmer, it appears, has also printed at different times 2,250 copies of his Memoirs at his own expense for distribution to Senators, Members of Congress and Executive Officers of the Government; that at the request of several Senators he prepared a large outline map to illustrate his Memoirs on Siberia, &c., printed by order of the Senate in 1848, and in consequence of the delay at the time in the printing of the Senate documents, he claims compensation for nine months' service, in which he was necessarily detained during that year in the preparation of the map, and correcting the proof-sheets of the usual, as well as extra, numbers of copies of said Memoirs ordered by the Senate, and also for four months' services in preparing a Report, illustrated by a special chart for the Secretary of State, under a Resolution of the Senate of the 16th January, 1850.

*In view of the highly meritorious and valuable services thus rendered by Mr. Palmer, and their important results in preparing the way for*

opening new marts in the East to our commerce, your Committee have come to the conclusion that he is justly entitled to                    thousand dollars in compensation for such service and expenses; they accordingly report a Bill allowing the same, and recommend its passage.

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C.

*Titles of the several printed documents of Mr. Palmer, referred to in Mr. Clayton's Report, including his Revised Plan for opening Japan, addressed to Mr. Clayton on the 17th December, 1849, together with extracts from Mr. Palmer's letter to President Fillmore, of the 6th January, 1851, soliciting his attention to the subject, and which was referred by the President to the Secretary of State.*

1. Letter to Hon. Charles J. Ingersoll, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives, containing some brief notices respecting the Independent Oriental Nation, and recommending that a special United States Mission be sent to open and extend American commercial intercourse with those countries. Dated New York, March 27th, 1846: 16 pages, 8 vo. One thousand copies were printed and distributed at Mr. Palmer's expense.

2. Letter to Hon. James Buchanan, Secretary of State, on the present state, productions, trade and commerce of the Oriental Nations with which the United States have not made treaties; recommending that a special mission be sent by the President to open commercial relations therewith, and suggesting the expediency of establishing a U. S. Naval Station in the Indian Archipelago; Proposing a Consular Plan and Superintendent of American trade in the East, together with the appointment of Consuls and Vice Consuls at certain ports therein, as well as in Australia, Van Dieman's Land, or Tasmania, and New Zealand. Dated New York, November 28th, 1846. In pursuance of a Resolution of the House of Representatives of the 9th February, 1847, it was transmitted to the House on the 15th of the same month, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and printed. State Dept. Doc. No. 96, 29th Cong., 2d Session, H. of Rep., 39 pages.

3. Memoir Geographical, Political, and Commercial, on the present state, productive resources, and capabilities for commerce of Siberia, Manchuria, and the Asiatic Islands of the Northern Pacific Ocean; and on the importance of opening commercial intercourse with those countries. It was addressed in a letter to His Excellency JAMES K. POLK, President of the United States, dated New York, January 10th, 1848, and arranged under the following heads, viz:

1. Siberia; its valuable products, rich gold mines; ports of Okotsk, Ayan, &c., and Shantar Islands on the Gulf of Okotsk.

2. Russian overland trade with China at Kiakta and Maimachin.

3. Manchuria; the oak or mountain silk-worm among its valuable products; Hoong Tchoong, on the Yellow sea, the entrepôt of Chinese trade with Corea; Kinchow, on the Gulf of Leaotong, the port of Ching Yan.

foo or Moukden, capital of Manchuria ; Castries bay, Ternay bay, Sufren bay, Anville bay, &c., on the Gulf of Tartary.

4. Island of Tarakay or Saghalien ; Japanese settlements on Aniva bay ; Langles bay, Estaing bay, Jonquiere bay, Patience bay, Nadeshda bay, &c.

5. Russian and Japanese Kuriles, including a description of the Japanese island of Yetso or Yeso, its towns of Matsmay, Chakodade or Hakodade, and its various bays, harbors, &c.

6. Steam communication with China ; superior commercial advantages of the island of Chusan, and its eligible situation as a halting and coaling station for the projected American trans-Pacific line of steamers.

7. Special mission to the East ; steam navigation on the Indus, Brahmaputra, &c. ; extensive caravan trade with northwestern and central Asia, &c.

8. Policy of encouraging immigration of Chinese agricultural laborers to California ; railroad from the Mississippi to San Francisco.

9. Ship canal from the Atlantic to the Pacific with a map of Central America showing the proposed route of the inter-oceanic canal, &c. Contract between the federal Government of the Republic of Central America and Mr. Palmer, for the construction of the canal by the route of the river San Juan, and Lake Nicaragua, executed at Guatemala, June 14, 1826, in pursuance of a special act of the Federal Congress of that Republic, passed 20th May, 1826, authorizing same.

On the 8th March, same year, the Memoir was transmitted by the President to the Senate, and on motion of Mr. Webster, referred to the Committee on the Library, and ordered to be printed. Subsequently, two thousand two hundred and fifty copies "as revised by Mr. Palmer, with his outline map of northeastern Asia and the Asiatic islands of the northern Pacific," illustrating the Memoir, were ordered by the Senate to be printed under his supervision ; to which is added an appendix containing miscellaneous information in regard to the several countries named in the Memoir, with an account of the shipwreck of the American whale ship Lawrence, Captain Baker, on the 27th May, 1846, in the vicinity of the Kurile islands, the barbarous treatment, sufferings, and privations endured by the mate and survivors of the crew, during their seventeen months' captivity and close confinement in loathsome prisons in Japan, by order of the Japanese authorities. Senate Doc., 30th Congress, 1st Session, Miscellaneous, No. 80, pages 103.

4. Letter to Hon. John M. Clayton, Secretary of State, enclosing a paper, geographical, political, and commercial, on the independent oriental nations, and containing a plan for opening, extending, and protecting American commerce in the East, dated Washington, April 14, 1849, published by direction of the Department of State in the *National Intelligencer* of the 6th September, 1849. Revised, and one thousand two hundred and fifty copies, with a copious appendix, containing extracts from his manuscripts relating to Japan, &c., were printed and distributed in November following by Mr. Palmer, at his own expense, 63 pages. It embraces a brief comprehensive *resumé* of a series of voluminous original papers or memoirs respecting the undermentioned oriental countries,

their respective political divisions, forms of Government, religions and languages ; their products, manufactures, imports, exports, trade, ports, and marts of commerce, &c., prepared at the special request of Mr. Clayton and for his use, viz :

1. EAST AFRICAN ISLANDS, COMORO GROUP ; translation of a letter from ABDALLAH, the late Sultan of those islands ; MADAGASCAR, &c.

2. EAST COAST OF AFRICA, including the Portuguese possessions from Port Natal, to the island of Socotra ;—its ports and adjacent islands, to Cape Guardafui.

3. ABYSSINIA PROPER.—Ports on the Red Sea and trading marts of the interior ; native region of the coffee tree ; the Gondar and Efat cotton among its numerous valuable products. Country of the Gallas, Somal, Suaheli, &c. Extensive caravan trade with Abyssinia, the Gallas country, and the interior and unknown regions of upper Africa, from the ports of Zeyla, Tadjourah and Berberah, on the Gulf of Aden.

4. ARABIA.—Barr-el-tour-Sinai, or Arabia Petræ ; Barr-Abad, or deserts ; El Hedjaz, or the Land of Pilgrimages ; Yemen proper, and Imamat of Sana' ; ports on the Red Sea, and importance of obtaining a reduction of the export duties and port charges on American vessels at the coffee ports of Mocha, Hodeida ; Hadramaut, on the Indian Ocean ; extensive deposits of guano on the island of Sikka, or Jibus, and on four of the islands lying in Curia Muria Bay, on the coast ; Imamat, of Oman, or Muscat, on the Gulf of Oman ; Lachsa, and the Bahrein Islands, on the Persian Gulf ; Nedjed, or upland country of the interior, the native region of the best breeds of the Arabian horse and camel ; Peninsula and British port of Aden.

5. PERSIA PROPER.—Ispahan, Tabriz, and other chief trading emporia of the interior ; ports on the Persian Gulf, Bushire, or Abushire, Congdon, Islands of Karrack, Ormus, Kishm, and Larák ; Gambroon, or Bunder Abbas, subject to the Imam of Muscat ; Mahommerah, on the river Karún, in the vicinity of the gulf, &c. The negotiation of an American commercial convention with the Shah of Persia recommended.

6. BELOOCHISTAN.—Ports of Posmee, Choubar, Sonmeanee, Guadel and Gwutter Bay, on the Indian Ocean, entrepôts of an extensive caravan trade with the chief emporia of Central Asia ; Kurachee, the principal seaport of Scinde, and the entrepot of the commerce of the Indus and Punjab.

7. CENTRAL ASIA.—Affghanistan, Bokhara, Turkestan, Tibet, &c.—Immense caravan trade of Central Asia with the Punjab, Caubul, China, Persia and Siberia, &c.

8. BURMAH PROPER, and the Anglo-Burman provinces.—Valuable caravan trade between Rangoon and the southwestern provinces of China, Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

9. ANNAM, or COCHIN CHINA.—Numerous and commodious ports and harbors on the China Sea and Gulf of Tonquin, advantageously situated for foreign trade.

10. INDIAN or EASTERN ARCHIPELAGO, including independent native and Malay islands and States ; Netherlands, India ; the Philippines, Span-



ish possessions ; proposed extension of American trade, now restricted to Manilla, with the chief ports of the Phillipines ; British Straits settlements of Singapore, Malacca, Pinang, and province of Wellesley ; Borneo proper ; Sooloo Groupe ; Papua, or New Guinea ; survey and exploration of the Island recommended, offering, with numerous other islands in the Archipelago, new and important fields for American commercial enterprise.

11. KINGDOM OF SIAM.—Bangkok, its chief port, one of the most important emporia in India beyond the Ganges, &c. Importance of negotiating a new treaty with the King of Siam.

12. KINGDOM OF COREA.—Foong-pee-en-wen, on the southern frontier, the Corean entrepot of trade with China. Extensive trade with Japan, conducted through the Bay of Tchosan, on the Strait of Corea, and the Japanese Island of Tsus-Sima ; Broughton's Bay ; Yang-King Bay, and Quelpart Island.

13. CHINA.—Tabular statistical view of China proper. Internal trade of China, Northern, Central and Southern. Suggesting the expediency of vesting the U. S. Commissioner in China with authority to act as Superintendent of American trade in that Empire and the adjacent maritime countries of Eastern Asia, with right of residence at Peking ; also the importance, in addition to the five consular ports, of opening the following ports and great marts and centers of trade in the interior of that Empire to American commerce, viz :

Ching-chau-foo, a great mart of the silk trade, about 85 miles from Amoy ; Suchau-foo, the Paris of China, about 70 miles from Shanghai ; Nanking, situated on the great Yang-tze-Kiang river, 225 miles from its mouth ; Ching-Kiang-foo, at the junction of same river with the Imperial Canal ; Wuchang-foo and Hang-Yang, opposite to it, also on the banks of that river, here three miles broad and very deep, in the center of China proper, and nearly 500 miles from the sea ; Hang-chow-foo, one of the largest and most flourishing cities of the Empire, at the southern terminus of the Imperial Canal ; Chapo-chin, the port of Hang-chow-foo ; Tien-tsin-foo, the emporium and port of Peking, on the river Peiho ; Tinghai, Island of Chusan ; Kelung in Formosa, abounding in coal ; Tang-chow-foo, on the Gulf of Pechele ; King-chow, on the Gulf of Leaotong, the port of Shing-King, or Moukden, capital of Manchuria.

16. THE EMPIRE OF JAPAN and its Colonial Dependencies, and proposing an American Diplomatic Mission to the Court of Yedo, with the object of opening friendly and commercial intercourse with that Empire.

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*Revised Plan for opening Japan, submitted to the Government of the United States by Aaron Haight Palmer, Counsellor Supreme Court of the United States, in a letter to Hon. John M. Clayton, Secretary of State.*

WASHINGTON, Sept. 17, 1849.

DEAR SIR : I have just received, and have the honor of enclosing to you herewith, for your information, the *Chinese Repository* for June last,

conducted by Mr. S. Wells Williams, at Canton, containing an account of the visit of the United States ship Preble, Commander Glynn, to Nagasaki, in April preceding, for the rescue of fifteen of the surviving crew of the American ship Lagoda, of New Bedford, who, together with Randal McDonald, of Oregon, were shipwrecked and detained nearly a twelvemonth in loathsome prisons in Japan; with a narrative of the cruel and barbarous treatment they suffered at the hands of the Japanese provincial and imperial authorities, from the time of their landing in the country up to the day of their delivery on board the Preble.\*

Commander Glynn appears to have accomplished his mission with the characteristic promptitude, energy, and determination of an American naval officer, in defiance of the customary opposition, threats, and evasions of the Japanese officials.

In view of the facts relating to the case, as stated in that journal, it is imperatively incumbent on our government to adopt immediate and energetic measures to compel the seagoon of Japan to make the most satisfactory atonement and indemnification for such barbarous and outrageous treatment of shipwrecked Americans, and guarantee the rights of hospitality and friendly protection to our countrymen who may hereafter have the misfortune to be thrown upon the coasts of Japan, or compelled to put into any of the ports of the empire, by stress of weather, or in want of assistance.

In my communication respecting Japan and the independent oriental nations, which I had the honor of addressing you under date of the 14th of March last,† I took the liberty of suggesting that the United States Commissioner to China be vested with authority to enter into a negotiation with the Japanese government for the opening of that empire to our commerce, and submitted therewith the draft of an appropriate letter missive from President Taylor to the emperor of Japan, which met with your approval. Let such a commissioner be appointed and clothed with the requisite authority and instructions, and dispatched to Canton with-

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\*The article occupies seventeen pages of the *Chinese Repository*, being a summary of the "Correspondence relative to the visit of the Preble to Nagasaki, for the purpose of demanding imprisoned American seamen," which was subsequently, on the 28th of August, 1850, transmitted by the Hon. William A. Graham, Secretary of the Navy, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and printed.—Ex. Doc. No. 84, 31st Cong. 1st Sess., 44 p.

†In Mr. Palmer's memoir of the 14th April, 1849, addressed to Mr. Clayton, he recommends that a United States envoy be sent to Japan, bearing the following presents for the seagoon:

"Charts of the United States coast survey and maps of the Topographical Bureau; public documents, such as late Presidential messages, Patent Office reports, and those relating to steam navigation on the Atlantic and Pacific, and proposed opening of communication by railroads, canals, and magnetic telegraphs with both oceans; and on Oregon and California; lithographs of American sea and river steamers; prints of American campaigns and sea battles; a set of carpenter's tools; a small assortment of choice medicines, together with a copy of the best American works on medicine, surgery, the physical sciences, mathematics, astronomy, navigation, engineering, mechanical arts and industrial pursuits of our country; a few agricultural implements; a small collection of cereals and garden seeds; tobacco and cotton seeds; files of American agricultural, mining, and railroad journals; newspapers and prices current of New York, Boston, &c.; daguerreotype likeness of the President and members of his cabinet; American Almanac for 1849; samples and musters of our cotton and woollen manufactures; description of the magnetic telegraph," &c.

out delay. Let him proceed thence, with the whole United States squadron in the Chinese seas, direct to the Bay of Yedo, and up to the capital, and demand an audience with the seagoon, or the head of the proper department of the imperial government; holding no official or personal intercourse with any other subordinate Japanese functionary, and submit to that government, categorically, the following *ultimatum*:

1st. Full and ample indemnity and reparation to the shipwrecked American seamen, for their detention, imprisonment, and barbarous treatment, by the Japanese officials, during their captivity in that empire, together with the expenses of sending and maintaining a squadron there to demand such indemnity and reparation, the amount of which to be specified in the commissioner's instructions; and a guarantee or pledge to be exacted from the Japanese government for its future good conduct towards Americans and the citizens or subjects of nations in amity with the United States, in the dominions of Japan, under the penalty of being held strictly accountable to our government for the detention, imprisonment, or ill usage of American citizens within that empire; and, moreover, to the payment of five thousand dollars to the heirs or legal representatives of any such citizen who may suffer death therein in consequence of violence or ill usage; with all incidental expenses of recovering the same, if deemed necessary, by a United States squadron.

2d. In all cases where American vessels are compelled by stress of weather, in want of repair or assistance, to put into any of the ports of the empire, that they may be aided and provided with necessaries to refit, at the current prices of the country; and, in case of shipwreck, that they receive kind and hospitable treatment, and be forwarded with their goods and effects, as soon as practicable, to the care of the United States consul, Batavia, or be delivered on board any American ship or vessel in Japan; and full reimbursement of all incidental expenses shall be made by the United States to the Japanese government.

3d. The opening of certain ports of the empire and its colonial dependencies to American commerce, the right of establishing United States consuls or commercial agents therein, and of accrediting an American minister or commissioner to the court of Yedo, and who are to be protected in all the recognized rights, privileges, and immunities incidental to such functionaries under the law of nations; and specially exempted from any degrading ceremonials or observances incompatible therewith. The minister or commissioner to hold direct personal and official intercourse with the proper department of the imperial government at Yedo, upon terms of perfect equality between the two sovereign and independent nations.

4th. The privilege of establishing coaling stations for American trans-Pacific steamers between San Francisco and Shanghai, at a port or ports in Japan proper, as shall be designated for such purposes; at the island of Tsus-Sima, in the strait of Corea, at Matsmai, the capital of Yeso, and at the Lew-Chew islands, and also to trade at those places; and American whaling ships to have the privilege of catching whales off the coast of Japan, and in the different bays of Yeso and the Japanese Kurile islands, without molestation, and of touching therein to refit, or procure wood, water, and provisions.

5th. The foregoing articles to be embodied in a commercial treaty or convention with the seagoon of Japan, and of which the treaty of Wang-shia, of the 3d July, 1844, between the emperor of China and the United States, shall form the basis.

In the event of a non-compliance with the above *ultimatum* on the part of the seagoon, the commissioner should be authorized and instructed to establish a strict blockade of the bay of Yedo, as well as the port of Matsmai, and such other of the maritime cities and towns of Japan as he shall deem expedient, and make reprisals of the Japanese commercial tax and tribute bearing junks, until the imperial government of Japan shall accede to said *ultimatum*, or to such modifications thereof as shall be satisfactory to the commissioner, and within the scope of his instructions.

There would be no difficulty, should proceedings of a compulsory nature be required, in putting a stop to the greater part of their coasting trade, which is very extensive, by intercepting the imperial revenues in their progress to the capital by sea, and taking possession of all government and trading vessels. At Sinagawa, the port or maritime suburb of Yedo, several thousands of vessels are sometimes collected; some bearing taxes in money or in kind, others laden with produce, merchandise, or fish; the latter being a staple article of food with all classes of the Japanese, were the daily supplies for the capital once stopped, that government would soon be brought to terms.

Japan is vulnerable at every point, and, although a brave and warlike nation, they have no means of land defence adequate to resist a single frigate. Most of their forts are of painted canvass, their powder is very bad, and they are quite inexpert in the use of artillery. Their troops are chiefly armed with bows, swords, spears, and matchlocks. None of their junks exceed three hundred tons, and they do not possess a single vessel of war.

The secular Emperor of Japan, and whose authority extends to all civil and military affairs of the empire, is generally called by his title, seagoon or "generalissimo," or that of *cubo*, which has nearly the same signification. He resides at Yedo, called the "eastern capital." The mikado, or spiritual emperor and sovereign pontiff of the Sintoo religion, resides at his capital, or see of Myaco, and has sole jurisdiction in all religious matters. He is never consulted on state affairs, except in case of a declaration of war, or negotiation with foreign powers.

Formerly, the princes of the different provinces of Japan were almost sovereigns in their territories. At the present day, those of Sanday in Moots, of Kaga and Satzuma, are the only ones who can be considered independent. All the others are merely governors appointed by the seagoon, who administer the districts confided to their charge. The empire is distributed into eight grand divisions or countries, (anciently independent kingdoms;) these are divided into sixty-eight provinces, which are again sub-divided into six hundred and twenty-two districts. The aggregate population is estimated at fifty millions.\*

\* Mr. Levyssohn, the late Dutch Resident at Dezima, estimates the population of Japan at seventy millions.

To aid him in the administration of the government, the seagoon has a council and senate; the first consists of five members, all of whom must be reigning princes; the second consists of fifteen, who may be either princes or nobles. The council, according to Golownin, decides ordinary cases without applying for the approbation of the seagoon; but in all extraordinary cases, though of but little importance, nothing can be done without his consent, nor can his will be carried into execution without the approval of the senate. The seagoon changes the members of his council at his pleasure; yet he does not often resort to this, lest the princes should oppose his authority; and how formidable they are appears from the precautions taken to keep them in check. They are obliged to reside every other year at the capital, which is the constant residence of their wives and children. The president of the council of state is styled "governor of the empire," an officer represented to be superior in authority to that of the Grand Vizier of Turkey and the Premier of England, and uniting the functions of both.

The Senate decide all important civil and criminal cases; and all others which are of importance must first be examined and decided by this body before they can come before the council of state. These two branches of the government form the legislative authority of the empire; they are, however, in many of their measures, very much influenced by the courtiers of the seagoon, who are entirely the creatures of his will.

The public affairs of Japan are assigned to eight Central Administrations or Boards:

1. The General Central Board.
2. The Board of Legislation and Public Instruction.
3. The General Board of the Interior.
4. The Board for the Affairs of the People, or General Police.
5. The General Board of War.
6. The Board of Criminal Affairs.
7. The Treasury Board.
8. The Ministry of the Imperial Dwelling.

The city of Yedo is situated on a large plain, on the eastern coast of the island of Nippon, in latitude thirty-six degrees thirty-nine minutes north, and longitude one hundred and forty degrees east. It lies in the form of a crescent around the bay of the same name, at the mouth of one of the largest rivers of the island. The circumference of the city is said to be over fifty miles, and its population is estimated at upwards of two millions. It contains the residences of the princes and great lords, who are compelled to reside there half the year. None of their mansions are more than two stories high, and most of them only one story, of a simple style of architecture, and generally surrounded by wide enclosed courts and extensive gardens.

The palace, or residence of the seagoon, is built of freestone, and is encompassed by a wall said to be fifteen miles in circumference, including a wide interior area, occupied by the spacious mansions of the princes and other high ministers of his court. The palace contains a great apartment called "*The Hall of Hundred Mats*," brilliantly adorned by pillars of ce-

dar, painted walls, and gilded ceilings. In this hall the presents brought by the Dutch mission for the Imperial court are displayed; and it is here the envoy is admitted to a brief audience with the seagoon and the grand dignitaries of the empire. After being compelled to make many degrading obeisances, to crawl on his hands and knees to a place shown him between the presents arrayed in due form on one side, and the place where the seagoon sits on the other, and then kneeling, he bows his forehead to the ground, and retires, crawling backwards, without being permitted to look up or utter a single word. On some occasions, the envoy and his suite have been required to dance, sing, play on musical instruments, and practice buffoonery for the amusement of the seagoon and his court.

Such degrading acts of homage and submission, together with the servile obsequiousness of the Dutch residents to the Japanese officials, on all occasions, for upwards of two hundred years, with the object of maintaining their paltry trade at Dezima, have inspired the court of Yedo with a profound contempt for foreigners of the western nations. This will, in a great measure, account for the invariable assumption of its haughty and arrogant bearing towards strangers who have visited the country, as well as for its barbarous treatment of shipwrecked mariners.

Yedo is the seat of various branches of industry, and the mart of an extensive trade with the whole empire. The wares of the merchants and shopkeepers are said by Fisher to be most beautiful, infinitely better and much cheaper than are to be found at Nagasaki. Across the river, in the center of the city, stands the celebrated bridge called Nippon-Bas, from which distances to all parts of the empire are measured.

In a Japanese map of Yedo, on a large scale, six feet square, in the possession of Mr. S. Wells Williams, of Canton, which I have been permitted to examine, every part of that vast metropolis is minutely delineated—the residences of the court, princes, and nobility are distinctly indicated thereon, each bearing the arms of its owner. The city appears to be intersected by a great number of canals, all communicating with the river. There is sufficient depth of water in the bay for vessels of the largest class to approach and anchor off the city.

In April, 1845, Captain Mercator Cooper, of the American whale ship *Manhattan*, with twenty-two Japanese seamen on board, whom he had rescued from shipwreck, was allowed to go up and anchor within a furlong of the city, where he remained four days, and was supplied, by command of the seagoon, with wood, water, rice, rye, vegetables of various kinds, and some crockery composed of the lacquered ware of the country. He was recruited of everything of which he stood in need, and all remuneration was refused. The Japanese seamen were permitted to return to their homes, but neither the captain nor crew of the ship were allowed to go over her sides. All communication with the shore was rigidly interdicted, and the ship was surrounded and guarded by three circular barriers of boats. She was visited by a great number of people of all ranks, including the governor of Yedo, and many of the high officers of the court, arrayed in golden and gorgeous tunics. All were filled with an insatiable curiosity to see the strangers, and inspect minutely everything on board.

Captain Cooper represents the governor of Yedo to be a grave and elderly looking person, somewhat grey, with a remarkably intelligent and benignant countenance, and of very mild and prepossessing manners. He was greatly interested with Captain Cooper's account of the people and civilization of our country, and the latter spared no pains to leave a good impression of the American name and character, especially as a commercial people, on the minds of those high officers whose position might carry them into audience with their sovereign.

The harbor of Yedo presented a maritime population as numerous and industrious as that which appeared to exist on land. Vessels of all sorts and sizes, from mere shallops to large junks, were under sail, or at anchor, wherever the eye turned on the bay. The port seemed to Capt. Cooper to be the mart of a prodigious coastwise commerce, and the whole bay was alive with the bustle and activity pertaining to it. The day before he left the seagoon sent him his autograph, as the most notable token of his respect and consideration for his humanity in the rescue and return of the shipwrecked seamen; but at the same time ordered him never to return. When he signified his readiness to depart, at the command of the governor of Yedo the anchor was weighed, an immense number of boats were attached to the bows of the ship, and in this manner she was towed twenty miles out to sea, against a head wind, when the Japanese took a courteous leave of her officers and crew.

On the occasion of Captain Sir Edward Belcher's visit to Nagasaki, in her Britannic majesty's ship *Samarang*, the same year, during his voyage for hydrographical surveys and magnetical observations in the eastern seas, no edict was issued, as is customary, forbidding his return; but, on the contrary, his promise to revisit the port was received with apparent satisfaction, and the chiefs who came on board, including several young men of family, expressed the hope that they might be able to show him their houses, and introduce him to their families. They assured him of the friendly disposition of the chiefs and great people of Nakasaki toward the English, and their hope that on his return the "High Counsellors of Yedo" would consent to his admission freely; "that it was within their power entirely, and not the seagoon's; that kindly expressions had transpired amongst the 'Great Chiefs' about Nagasaki, and they were generally precursors of good." On his declining to await such determination, having no authority to negotiate with the Japanese government, they requested that he would bring with him cow-pock matter, sulphate of quinine, ipecacuanha, nux vomica, and other medicines, engaging on their part to have several little commissions executed for him. He was supplied with spars, wood, water, and fresh provisions, free of charge, and permitted to land on an island in the harbor to make magnetical observations.

In the month of May last, Commander Mathison, of her Britannic majesty's steamer *Mariner*, made a survey of the entrance of the bay of Yedo, and anchored off the town of Orogawa, (commonly called Uraga,) which contains twenty thousand inhabitants. When about eight miles from cape Misaki, which forms the southwest end of the bay, ten boats *came alongside, manned with 20 men and five officers in each, and armed*

with muskets and swords. The officers wore a sword and dagger. He allowed the latter to come on board, when they presented him a paper, written in French and Dutch, desiring him not to anchor or cruise about the bay. Finding, however, that he was determined to proceed, they offered their boats to tow him up to the anchorage, which he accepted. Guard boats were stationed round the steamer during the night. Forts were lighted up, and about four hundred boats, all manned and armed, collected along the shore, each carrying a lantern. He made them keep at a respectable distance, had his guns loaded, and kept careful watch on deck at night, during the three days he remained at that port to complete the survey.

Commander Mathison regards Orogawa as the key of the capital, from which it is distant about twenty-five miles. He states that all the junks going and returning from Yedo arrive here to pass the custom-house; and that with a moderate armed naval force trade might be completely stopped, as Yedo entirely depends on its supplies by sea. There is a very good road between the towns.

After leaving Orogawa, he also visited and made an accurate survey of Simodi bay, where there are three fishing villages. The authorities supplied his crew with plenty of fish, and when he was ready to depart sent fifty boats to tow the steamer out to sea. The governor of the province, residing at the town of Miomaki, thirteen miles distant, came on board the steamer, and was supposed to be a man of rank, from the respect shown to him by his followers.

You will thus perceive that Yedo is accessible to large vessels, and that the Japanese oppose no resistance to ships of war. The presence of an American squadron before that capital, bearing a commissioner vested with authority to treat with the Japanese Government upon the basis of the above *ultimatum*, and who should conduct the negotiation with due courtesy, firmness of purpose, and unwavering decision, would undoubtedly stand a better chance of success than any other mission hitherto sent from the west to Japan. It would impress the despotic seagoon and the "high councillors" of his court with a salutary respect for the dignity, majesty, and power of this empire republic, and prove a tangible demonstration of the paternal policy of our Government to extend its protection to American citizens wheresoever dispersed, or howsoever oppressed, in the remotest quarters of the globe; it would infallibly bring Japan within the political pale of the western nations; open up that rich, populous, and productive empire to our commerce, secure the desired privileges for our steamships and whalers in its seas, ports, and harbors, and reflect lasting credit on the firmness, decision, and energy of General Taylor's administration.

The hostile reception which Captain Ingersoll, of the American ship *Morrison*, received at the several points at which he touched on the coast, in his efforts to open trading intercourse with that country, in July, 1837, was mainly owing, as was subsequently ascertained to his being unarmed, and having on board two missionaries, the Rev. Peter Parker and the Rev. Dr. Gutzlaff. The official visit of Com. Biddle, with the United States ships *Columbus* and *Vincennes*, to the bay of Yedo, in July, 1844



its abortive result, and the gross indignity to which he submitted at the hands of a common Japanese soldier, appears, by the deposition of one of the crew of the *Lagoda*, to have left an unfavorable impression on the public authorities and people of Japan respecting the American character, which can only be effaced by an imposing mission for the accomplishment of the objects above indicated. \* \* \* \*

I have the honor to be, with great respect, dear sir, your most faithful and obedient servant,

AARON H. PALMER.

Hon. JOHN M. CLAYTON, *Secretary of State*.

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*Extracts from a letter of Mr. Palmer to President Fillmore, soliciting his attention to the plan submitted by him to Secretary Clayton, for opening American intercourse with Japan. Original endorsed "Referred to the Secretary of State. M. F. January 6, 1851."*

WASHINGTON, January 6, 1851.

Dear Sir: Deeming the opening of diplomatic relations, commercial intercourse and steam navigation with the independent maritime nations of eastern Asia and the Indian archipelago worthy the favorable consideration of our government, I have the honor to solicit your early attention to this important subject.

In the absence of any specific appropriation for a special oriental mission, the position of China, designated by the natives as "the central flowery kingdom," in respect to the surrounding nations of eastern and southern Asia, and over which, with the exception of Japan, the Chinese emperor is the acknowledged suzerain, would suggest the expediency of accrediting the United States commissioner to that empire to the sovereigns of those nations, and likewise of vesting him with authority to act as general superintendent of American trade in their dominions.

By placing our squadron in those seas under the commissioner's orders, he would be enabled to make occasional short visits, in a national steamer, to Japan and its dependencies, to Corea, Cochin China, Siam, Burmah, and the Indian archipelago, to open up intercourse and make commercial treaties, especially with the government of Japan, without essentially interfering with his duties as commissioner to China; such arrangement to be continued until our increasing intercourse and commerce with those eastern regions would justify the appointment of resident ministers and consuls therein by our government.

Much valuable information—geographical, political, commercial, and hydrographical—could be acquired in such brief missions that would prove of great utility and advantage to us in our ulterior intercourse with the countries thus visited, particularly in selecting suitable coaling stations, and making the requisite preliminary arrangements for the establishment of steam communication between San Francisco and that quarter of the world.

*Under this comprehensive, effective, and economical system, whilst our*

legitimate commerce with China is about equal to one half that of the British, with the exception of the opium traffic, (which is prohibited,) and possesses far greater capabilities for a profitable expansion, the annual charges incident to the extension and supervision of our trade with China and the adjacent nations, even in the event of raising the commissioner to the rank of minister plenipotentiary, as recommended in the New York memorial to General Taylor of the 24th of February, 1849, would not probably exceed one-tenth of the expenditure for the British superintendent of trade in China and their consular establishments at the five privileged ports, which amounted, for the year ending on the 31st March, 1848, to thirty-three thousand three hundred and twenty-six pounds ten shillings sterling. \* \* \* \* \*

The people of Japan, in general, are known to be friendly and well disposed towards foreigners, with whom they have invariably evinced a disposition to hold intercourse and trade, but are prevented doing so openly for fear of their rulers and the law. The government of that country must, ere long, be compelled, by the force of circumstances, and especially by the presence of our people on the Pacific, to succumb to the progressive commercial spirit of the age.

In 1811, Prince Arrao Madsimano Kami, an eminent Japanese statesman, then governor of the island of Yezo and the Kurile dependencies, was in favor of opening the ports of the empire to foreign trade, and addressed the following language, in an official report from Matsmai, to the supreme government at Yedo: "Since the sun, the moon, and the stars, which are the creation of the Almighty, are variable in their course, the Japanese law, the work of men's hands, prohibiting foreign vessels entering any other port than Nagasaki, cannot be eternal." This prince was subsequently promoted to the higher office of governor of the imperial palace at Yedo and member of the council of State.

I have, on various occasions, during the last five years, brought to the notice of our government repeated instances of the barbarous treatment and indignities to which shipwrecked American seamen are constantly subjected in Japan; showing the necessity and urgency of some efficient and energetic national measures being adopted to compel the court of Yedo to make satisfactory atonement and indemnity for such outrages, and guaranty the rights of charitable hospitality and friendly protection to those of our countrymen who may have the misfortune to be shipwrecked upon the Japanese coasts, or compelled to put into any of their ports by stress of weather, in want of assistance, repair, &c.

In a letter to Hon. John M. Clayton, late secretary of State, under date of the 17th September, 1849, on file with my papers in the Department of State, transmitting a detailed account of the detention and sufferings of the crew of the American whaler *Lagoda*, in Japan, and from which they were rescued by Commander Glynn, of the United States ship *Preble*, at Nagasaki, in the preceding month of April, I submitted a plan for the accomplishment of the important object above suggested, which met with his approbation. Having since maturely reconsidered it in all its bearings, and particularly with reference to the national character and policy of the Japanese, I feel satisfied it is the only feasible one

that comports with the dignity of our government to adopt, in promptly demanding redress for the wrongs they have inflicted on our countrymen, with a satisfactory guarantee against their recurrence. A mission of the proposed character, intrusted to a commissioner possessing the requisite tact, energy, and firmness of purpose, and supported by an imposing United States squadron, it may be confidently predicted, would speedily bring the haughty and intractable seagoon, his "councillors of State," and spiritual "mikado," into some satisfactory arrangements, and open that empire to our commerce.

I have the honor to be, with the highest respect, your excellency's most faithful and humble servant,

AARON H. PALMER.

His excellency, MILLARD FILLMORE,  
*President of the United States.*

#### D.

*Brief statement of facts in regard to the ultimate adoption of Mr. Palmer's revised plan for opening Japan, with certain modifications in its details, and the performance of the mission by Commodore Perry.*

By direction of President Fillmore, Mr. Palmer had frequent interviews, between the 6th January and the month of May, 1851, with his lamented friend, the late Hon. DANIEL WEBSTER, then Secretary of State, in regard to the proposed mission to Japan, as indicated in the foregoing letter to Mr. Clayton, and which Mr. Webster approved with certain modifications in its details. Commodore John H. Aulick, U. S. Navy, having, meanwhile, represented to Mr. Webster that it would be a suitable occasion for returning sixteen shipwrecked Japanese sailors, then at San Francisco, to their native country, the mission was definitively authorized by the President and his cabinet, and Commodore Aulick designated as the Envoy to perform it.

It will therefore appear, by reference to the files of the State and Navy Departments, that on the 10th May, 1851, Commodore John H. Aulick was invested with Plenipotentiary Powers accrediting him as the Envoy of the United States to the Emperor of Japan. His commission authorizing him to negotiate a treaty of amity and commerce with his Japanese Majesty is dated 30th May, 1851. He sailed from Norfolk in the U. S. steamer *Susquehanna*, destined for the China seas and the prosecution of his mission on the 8th June following. His instructions from the Secretary of State bear date the 10th, of same month; after his arrival at Canton he was taken seriously ill, and was recalled on the 18th November, 1851, by the Secretary of the Navy, from the command of the U. S. Squadron, in the China seas. On the 13th November, 1852, Commodore M. C. Perry, U. S. Navy, who had been previously appointed successor to Commodore Aulick in the mission, received his instructions, together with copies of the general instructions and orders *that had been given to his predecessor, for his direction and guidance in*

the performance of the mission, sailed from Norfolk in the U. S. steamer Mississippi on the 24th of same month in the prosecution thereof, and finally concluded a treaty with the Japanese Commissioners at Kanagawa, Bay of Yedó, 31st March, 1854.

In Mr. Palmer's memorial to the Senate of the 18th January, 1855, he states that Commodore Perry had several interviews with him for the purpose of obtaining information respecting Japan, as will appear by the following extract :

"And your memorialist further respectfully represents, that between 1849 and 1852, Commodore Perry had several interviews with your memorialist, soliciting information respecting Japan, and was presented by your memorialist with printed copies of his said documents on the Independent Oriental Nations, including a copy of his Plan for Opening Japan ; and that the last interview your memorialist had with Commodore Perry on the subject was by special written request of the Secretary of the Navy, to meet him at the Secretary's private residence in Washington on the 29th October, 1852, to impart to him such further views and suggestions as your memorialist might deem useful and important for his information and guidance in the execution of his mission to Japan. And without intending in the slightest degree to derogate from the marked ability, firmness and decision evinced by that gallant and distinguished chief of the squadron and mission in conducting the negotiations and concluding the said Treaty of Kanagawa with the Japanese Plenipotentiaries, your memorialist confidently trusts it is conclusively shown by the before-mentioned several documents that the expedition and mission were projected and completed in conformity with the leading views, suggestions and recommendations submitted by your memorialist in said documents to our Government." Pages 3 and 4.

### E.

List of the Memoirs Geographical, Hydrographical, Political, and Commercial, specially prepared by Aaron Haight Palmer, of the City of Washington, by order of John P. Kennedy, Secretary of the Navy, for the use of the United States Expedition in the China and Japan Seas, Northern Pacific, Behring's Strait, Indian Archipelago, &c., &c., &c., under Commander Cadwallader Ringgold, U. S. Navy.

1. Bonin, or Arzobispo Islands.

Colonial Dependencies of Japan.

2. Loo-Choo Islands,

3. Meiacosima, or Hajicosima Groupe,

4. Island of Tsus-Sima, Strait of Corea,

5. Yeso, and the Japanese Kurile Islands,

6. Island of Tarakay, or Saghalien,

7. Ports and Islands of Eastern Siberia, on the Gulf of Okotsk, Kamtschatka, Sea of Anadyr, Behring's Strait, &c., &c., &c.,

8. Ports of Manchuria, on the Gulf of Tartary, the River Amour, &c.

9. The Aleutian, or Fox Islands,

10. Kingdom of Corea,

- 11. Empire of Annam, or Cochin China,
- 12. Kingdom of Siam,
- 13. Indian, or Asiatic Archipelago.

Brief description of the Netherlands, Spanish and English possessions and establishments in the Archipelago; Malayan Peninsula; Independent Malay Islands and Buji States; Borneo proper; Kingdom of Acheen, Sumatra; Papua, or New Guinea; Marian Islands, or Ladrones; dependencies of the Philippines, &c., &c., &c.

14. Miscellaneous Memoranda. The whole containing four hundred and sixty pages of foolscap, accompanied with an illustrative map.

The information contained in those memoirs has been drawn from the latest official and reliable sources—Oriental, European, and American—carefully revised with additions and corrections to the present time, and are respectfully submitted by the undersigned to the Secretary of the Navy in the confidence that they will furnish the latest and most reliable data and guides, in a condensed and comprehensive form, for the intelligent and efficient prosecution of the expedition than can be obtained by our Government from any other source whatever. \* \* \* \*

All which is respectfully submitted.

AARON H. PALMER.

Hon. JOHN P. KENNEDY, *Sec. of the Navy*.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26, 1823.

#### F.

Copy of a letter from Commander Cadwallader Ringgold to Mr. Palmer, attesting the preparation and delivery to the Hon. John P. Kennedy, late Secretary of the Navy, and by his order, of the memoirs mentioned in the preceding list, marked E:

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26th, 1857.

A. H. PALMER, Esq., Washington.—*Dear Sir:*—In reply to your note of the 21st inst., I have great pleasure in stating that you were employed in September, 1852, by the Hon. J. P. Kennedy, then Secretary of the Navy, to furnish me with such portions or extracts from your "Memoirs" relating to the maritime regions of North eastern Asia, Behring's Strait, the China and Japan Seas, Indian Archipelago, &c., as I should deem useful and important in the projected Exploring Expedition under my command, and that I believe the foregoing to be a correct list of the several Memoirs which you completed and delivered to the Hon. Secretary of the Navy, on the 26th of February, 1853, for my use during the voyage of the Expedition, in pursuance of his direction to you on the subject.

I would also further state that the packet containing those Memoirs was left on board my ship, and doubtless, came into the possession of my successor, Commander John Rodgers, when I relinquished the command of the Expedition, in consequence of severe illness, and returned to the United States. I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

CADWALLADER RINGGOLD, U. S. N.











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